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SECURITY INFORMATION

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O/NK Staff Comments on "National Operations Plan — USSR and European Satellites," of Operations Coordinating Board,
13 November 1953

(My marginalia) wph.

1. General — The comments which follow below are addressed to selected paragraphs in the intelligence section of the paper contained on Pages 2-8. In addition, however, some general comments, applying to this section but also applying to the paper as a whole, seem indicated:

a. It is not evident that the authors, in formulating some of their major premises about Soviet affairs, have drawn on existing NIE's and other intelligence studies, or consulted standard scholarly studies of Soviet Communism. On the contrary many of the judgments made tend rather far toward the half-truths and exaggerations characteristic of journalistic analysis of these matters. The result is to inflate both the capabilities and the vulnerabilities of the Soviet system.

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b. It is stated in Paragraph 2.g. that the desirability of making the Soviet leaders receptive to negotiations is to be taken into account. It may be doubted whether this objective is compatible with the actions outlined in Paragraphs 2.a. - 2.f., which add up to a program of harassment. Probably there are only two conditions under which the USSR would negotiate seriously: (1) if Soviet leaders feared that they were confronted by an overwhelming and menacing array of power, and (2) if they anticipated positive strategic advantages resulting from the negotiations. The program of political-warfare harassment outlined naturally will not bring about the first condition and at the same time is almost certain to convince the USSR that the second condition is unlikely to obtain. This seems contradictory to the objective described in Paragraph 2.g.

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c. There is a tendency throughout this paper to sacrifice precision to the use of the highly flavored, more "dynamic" words. It is far from clear what concrete actions, where and how, are contemplated when the authors use such forceful but vaguely defined terms as "exploit", "foster", "undermine", etc.

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2. Paragraph 5 — Leaving aside the question whether the Communist system may not suffer from its own characteristic "restrictions and inhibitions", this paragraph gives a misleading impression. It implies that Communist expansionism has been pushing the Iron Curtain outward at

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a steady pace since 1939, and is continuing to do so for the next decade. In fact Communist territorial gains since 1939 resulted from the power vacuum left by World War II rather than from successful Communist political penetration or conspiracy. No European state has fallen under Communist control without first being occupied by the Red Army. In Western Europe, the history of the Communist movements since 1945 has been one of continuing decline in numbers and capabilities. Only in China have the Communists achieved a successful national revolution, a result due to a great complexity of factors in post-war China, but certainly not due to any decisive role played by aid and support from the USSR. It is not at all clear that, except under conditions of successful general war, the Communist system has good prospects of continuing its expansion.

3. Paragraph 6 — This paragraph gives a completely misleading picture of the power of the Soviet Bloc relative to the free world and of its capability for undertaking aggressive expansion. It is enough to juxtapose its two final sentences with the judgments reached in two recent NIE's.



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OCE-16: "Actually there is no force in being capable of preventing continuance of the Communist offensive, in almost any direction."

NIE-95: "Bloc leaders probably realize that the Western system of alliances and the West's rearmament since 1950 have greatly increased the risk that new local aggressions will be met by military opposition. They probably estimate that there is practically no area of the world where Bloc forces could initiate overt military aggression without grave risk of Western military reaction, which might lead to general war or to political consequences seriously adverse to Bloc interests. We therefore believe it unlikely that the Bloc will deliberately initiate new local aggressions with identifiable Bloc armed forces during the period of this estimate."

OCE-16: "With the prospect of parity in nuclear weapons and the growing industrial might of the Communist empire military deterrents to further expansion of the Communist empire will soon cease to be effective."

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NIE-95: "We believe that during the period of this estimate (until mid-1955) the Communist rulers will continue to consider general war a hazardous gamble, involving at a minimum the certainty of widespread destruction in the USSR and at the same time carrying the risk that the Soviet system itself would be destroyed."

NIE-90: — on Bloc economic power — "... the total output of the Soviet economy will remain much lower than that of the US, and the output of the entire Bloc will remain much lower than that of the NATO states. We estimate that Soviet GNP was about one-quarter to one-third that of the US in 1952, and that the GNP of the entire Bloc was about one-third that of the NATO states. These disparities in ratio terms may be reduced slightly during the period of this estimate, although the disparities in absolute terms will probably be widened somewhat."

4. Paragraph 11 — This paragraph appears to confuse Communist covert activities undertaken for espionage purposes and Communist activities directed to the actual overthrow of free governments. The theory that there are "nominally free countries" which can be seized overnight by Communists as a result of covert penetration cannot be supported by intelligence. The Communists themselves always associate the successful seizure of power with mass action by an open Communist party. We do not know of any countries which are "nominally free" or in which there is the remotest possibility of an "overt takeover" by Communists. Nor are we aware that Communist infiltration in free countries has yet achieved results that may fairly be described as "disastrous." There has been and probably will continue to be successful Communist espionage, but we do not believe that any free government now stands in danger of being captured from within by Communists.

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5. Paragraphs 15, 16, 17 — These paragraphs all deal with the problem of nationalism in the Soviet Orbit. It is certainly correct to say that the nationalist aspirations of the peoples of the European Satellites and even of Communist China are a potentially disruptive force in the Soviet Empire. It is not correct, however, to treat the problem of nationalities within the USSR as equivalent in kind and degree to the problem of nationalism in the Communist Bloc as a whole. The nationalities within the USSR do not have a prior history of existence as independent national states. Except for the Ukrainians, they are too small in number to aspire to separate national existence. All,

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including the Ukrainians, have been a part of the Russian national state and in addition have been the object for thirty years and more of policies (including deportation, forced settlement of Russians among them, extermination, and forced cultural assimilation) calculated to minimize the danger that separate nationality aspirations would survive among them. There is indeed a nationality problem within the USSR, and it probably is the source of tensions within the Russian national state, but we do not believe that nationalist separatism constitutes a serious danger to the unity of the USSR. Evidence from within the USSR itself, as distinct from the claims put forward by various exile groups, does not warrant giving the same importance to nationalities within the Soviet state as to the nationalisms of Eastern Europe.

6. Paragraph 18 — As yet we do not have sufficient evidence to justify a flat statement that "any increase in consumer goods production will entail the diversion of material and manpower from war production." Until we have a more complete picture of what the actual impact of the recently announced economic programs will be for the whole economy, it would be well to preserve caution on this subject. Our last coordinated estimate, NIE-95, states that "these adjustments in present economic programs will represent no change in the policy of giving primary emphasis to heavy industry ... and will not result in any curtailment of the Bloc's military effort." Moreover, we believe that the new economic program stems less from "an attempt to dispel passive resistance and dissatisfaction" than from the belief that improved living standards will improve labor productivity and thus contribute to the more rapid advance of the whole economy. It is not therefore a defensive maneuver designed to overcome worker resistance, concerning which we have no evidence, but is intended rather to give new stimulus to productivity and hence the rate of growth. If the new program achieves its aims, it will be evidence of strength rather than weakness in the Soviet social and economic system. (The implication that the new program arises from weakness is also found in the final sentence of Paragraph 19.)

7. Paragraph 22 — If this paragraph means that the people of the USSR would like to see the Western Powers attempt their deliverance from the Communist system through a general war, we are unaware of what kind of evidence it may be based upon. We doubt even that the Satellite peoples would make such a choice. In the USSR itself, we believe that there is very widespread fear of another great war, as indicated by the persistent efforts of the Soviet regime to prove to the Russian people that its policy is motivated only by a desire to preserve peace.

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8. Paragraph 23 — We are not aware of any reliable estimate of the number of slave laborers in the USSR. Whatever their numbers may actually be, we think there is little likelihood of "civil disturbance" in which they would become a "vital threat to Communist authority." It is therefore difficult to see in what precise sense, short of total war, their existence "constitutes a vulnerability and provides a field for exploitation by the Free World."

*— unlikely
propaganda?*

9. Paragraph 25 — The questions raised in attempting to evaluate the position of Soviet intellectuals are difficult and complex. It may be that "the ideological straight-jacket" and the "isolation from foreign contact" imposed on them "has caused resentment." On the other hand, they are offered many inducements and privileges by the regime, with the result that they enjoy a social and economic status probably superior in relative terms to that held by intellectuals in the West. As principal beneficiaries of the Soviet system, they also have an interest in its preservation. They may feel in the long run that they can not only preserve their existing privileges but also expand them in such a way as to increase the area of freedom allowed to them. It is difficult to see how this group, which at most may have an ambivalent attitude toward the regime, can be "exploited" in any immediate sense. Nor should it be supposed, given the presence of a tradition of anti-Westernism in Russian culture, that all Soviet intellectuals are repelled by "the requirement that Western culture and scientific achievement be ridiculed and attacked." Quite aside from the fact that they inherit a Russian national culture with its anti-Western features, the present generation of Soviet "intellectuals" are the product of a specifically Communist training. Their probable attitude toward the value of freedom cannot be assumed to be identical with that found in "intellectuals" who are the product of a Western environment and Western traditions of intellectual freedom.

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